Prince challenges Canada on climate; Ottawa urged to use its 'incredible influence' to find solutions as Ukraine war heightens urgency

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Body

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has hastened the urgent need to transition to a green economy, Prince Charles said Wednesday during a whirlwind tour of Canada's capital, where he also met with displaced Ukrainians and lit candles in an Orthodox church.

The prince and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, packed numerous Ottawa landmarks into the busy second day of their Platinum Jubilee tour, but the Ukraine crisis - the worst European military conflict since the Second World War - became a major focus of their visit.

Prince Charles spoke about the impact of the Russian invasion on the world economy at a sustainable-finance roundtable. The war has driven up gas prices across the globe, prompting many to call for quicker action on reducing the world's dependence on fossil fuels.

The prince urged Canada to use its "incredible influence" at the G7 and in other international forums to work on solutions to the climate and biodiversity crisis.

He said he subscribes to an idea put forward by Indigenous Peoples, "that we must be thinking seven generations ahead, really, to have any chance of making sure we leave a better world behind us."

The world is facing an emergency that governments alone cannot solve, said the prince, who has long been an environmental advocate.

"I've been trying to bring people from around the world together on sustainability for something dreadful like 40 years now," he said.

"Now after endless procrastination, time is running out. So with trillions of dollars in assets, the private sector and private finance hold the ultimate key, I believe, to our success."

Prince Charles called for "bold, innovative and creative public-private solutions at scale if we are ever, ever to see results."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called the prince a "leading voice on climate action."

The prince and Camilla arrived in Canada on Tuesday, spending the day in Newfoundland and Labrador before flying to the national capital in the evening. Their itinerary in Ottawa included bilateral meetings with Trudeau and Gov. Gen. Mary Simon and a Platinum Jubilee reception at Rideau Hall.

Métis National Council President Cassidy Caron said she intended to use that occasion to make a request for an apology from the Queen for the legacy of residential schools.

Earlier on Wednesday, the couple lit candles and listened to a prayer service inside the Blessed Virgin Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral as a gesture of support for the war-ravaged country.

"Your country is truly a friend of Ukraine, having extended a helping hand, not only militarily but also as fellow citizens of our planet. We will never, never forget that," Father Ihor Kutash told the royals.

Outside the cathedral, the crowd chanted "Slava Ukraini," which means glory to Ukraine. Among those gathered was Iryna Bloshenko, who arrived in Canada from Dnipro in the besieged country just four weeks ago.

"I am very happy, very excited to see the royals," she said, waving a Ukrainian flag. "We appreciate the royals' support for Ukraine."

After the service, the royal couple met with a Ukrainian family who fled the Russian invasion.

At Assumption Elementary School, Camilla sat down to read to a grade one and two class and spoke with older students in a French immersion class. Many of the students' families are new Canadians, and Prince Charles spoke with parents who've recently immigrated.

Charles and Camilla are to fly to Yellowknife Thursday for the final day of their three-day tour.

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